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ABSTRACT

To determine on which levels of cooperation most media specialists and public librarians function, and whether or not the cooperation is satisfactory, a survey was conducted of libraries and school media specialists in the Atlanta-Fulton County and Gwinnett County (Georgia) areas. Questionnaires (152) were mailed to 115 school library and media specialists and 37 public librarians, with an 83 percent response rate. Data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. A chi square analysis compared media specialist and public librarian responses. Most school library media specialists and public librarians participate in some cooperative activities with each other. Summer reading programs were the cooperative activities most frequently identified by both public librarians and school library media specialists. A statistically significant correlation was shown between the level of satisfaction and the type of library, with public librarians indicating greater satisfaction. Eighty-one percent of school library media specialists and 72.7 percent of public librarians identified lack of time as the major obstacle to interlibrary cooperation. Most cooperation between the two groups was on an informal communication level. Six tables present study findings. Five appendixes contain a model for cooperation, both questionnaires, and both cover letters. (Contains 14 references.) (SLD)

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Cooperation Between School Library Media Specialists and Public Librarians

By

Susan Tregone

A Scholarly Paper

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of Requirements for the
Degree of Specialist in Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education
Georgia State University

Atlanta, Georgia
1993

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ABSTRACT

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOL LIBRARY
MEDIA SPECIALISTS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIANS

by

SUSAN TREGONE

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine on which levels of cooperation most media specialists and public librarians function and whether or not the cooperation was satisfactory. The study also determined what obstacles prevented functioning at a higher level.

Methods and Procedures

This descriptive study surveyed the public library manager at each of the libraries in the Atlanta-Fulton County and Gwinnett County Public Libraries, and one media specialist at every school in the Fulton and Gwinnett County School System. One hundred-fifty-two survey questionnaires were mailed to 115 school library and media specialists and 37 public librarians. The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Chi-square

analysis compared the school media specialists' and public librarians' responses on their satisfaction with the cooperation.

Results

A total of 83% of the survey questionnaires were returned. Summer reading promotions were the most cooperative activities identified by both public librarians and school library media specialists. A statistically significant correlation was shown between the level of satisfaction and whether the library is public or school, with the public librarians showing greater satisfaction. Eighty-one percent and 72.7% of the school library media specialists and public librarians respectively identified lack of time as the major obstacle to interlibrary cooperation.

Conclusions

The majority of school library media specialists and public librarians participate in some cooperative activities with each other. Most operate on an informal communication level according to Shannon's scale (1991). School media specialists were much more satisfied with the level of communication and cooperation between them than were the

public librarians. Lack of time was seen as the major obstacle to good cooperation, followed by lack of staff and lack of communication.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

School/public library cooperation has been of interest since the late 1800's. Hundreds of articles have been written on this topic. School and public librarians speak favorably of the advantages of cooperation to the youth he or she serves. However, to the present day, although there have been many successful cooperative ventures, the literature questions the actual amount of progress being made in specific situations and the degree of commitment that school and public librarians really feel toward the concept (Aaron, 1980).

Public libraries and school media centers' roles are different. The public library's role is to facilitate the informal self-education of the individual throughout his/her lifetime. The school media center is an integral part of the total instructional system, teaching the student to be an independent locator and user of information (Haycock, 1990).

According to Shultz (1990), there are distinct differences in purpose between school and public libraries and the two sets of guidelines clearly reflect this. However, Douglas finds school and public libraries have much in common:

> Initially our goals are the same: instill in the child a desire to read and learn; give the child the skills to learn and introduce them to tools and resources; equip them with all they will need to live a productive and successful life (Douglas,1990, p.9).

The results of identifiable research show that little cooperation exists between the two kinds of libraries. Shannon's study of public and school libraries in a North Carolina county (Shannon, 1991) revealed that most of the interaction between the school and public librarians was on an informal communication level. The most important factor leading to successful cooperative efforts was communication (Shannon, 1991). The biggest obstacles were lack of time (Shannon, 1991; Dyer, cited in Shannon, 1991), lack of communication (Shannon, 1991), money, and attitude (Dyer, cited in Shannon, 1991). "The attitudes and perceptions of users and providers of resources and services have been cited as two of the most important elements influencing success" (Aaron, 1980, p. 13).

Callison, Fink, and Hager's study discovered that generally public librarians initiated the activities with school librarians or the public schools and their teachers. Seldom were the school librarians shown to initiate cooperative activities (Callison, et al, 1989).

> School and public librarians all believe that communication and cooperation with each other is important. Since we're all working toward the same goal, why not work together on establishing roles and missions, gathering needed data, and building local partnerships? The ultimate success of media programs depends, to a large extent, upon the level of understanding and support within the general school community for the mission, goals, and objectives of the program. Building partnerships with community groups, students, staff, and administrators is the key to success (Shultz, 1990, p. 126).

Successful and effective programs often grow out of personal commitment, a hands-on philosophy, a real desire to get results, and the ability to change and adapt as the need arises. This has not always been easy. Disagreements, conflicting jurisdictions, scheduling difficulties, and friction have occurred. [There must be]...a personal commitment to improve

library instruction for students and belief that the project is an area of growth that is beneficial to both of our institutions (Spinella & Hicks,1988, p.656).

> In order to provide extended educational opportunities for the young people of a community, cooperation between these institutions becomes ever more essential; yet in a world of separate governing agencies with different boundaries and administration and varying sources of revenue, such cooperation is difficult. It is not impossible if the school media specialists, teachers, and public librarians involved can regard themselves as a team with one common goal; the goal of quality education and true literacy for all the children of the community (Cederoth & Chilton, 1990, p. 150).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the levels of cooperation, whether formal or informal, between school media specialists and public librarians and whether or not the cooperation was satisfactory. If not satisfactory what was needed for cooperation to succeed?

The research questions were:

1. What is the level of communication and cooperation between school library media specialists and public librarians?
2. Are the school library media specialists and public librarians satisfied with the level of communication and cooperation?
3. What obstacles do they see to interlibrary communication and cooperation?

Significance of the Study

Although research has been done in some other states on the subject of cooperation between public libraries and school librarians, there appears to be a lack of research on this subject done in Georgia. With technological advances there is a greater ability to resource share between the two institutions. Budget cutbacks in both institutions are making resource sharing more necessary (Walker, cited in Shannon, 1992). Public librarians work with school children on school research reports in the late afternoons and evenings when school media centers are closed. Often lack of communication and cooperation has led to friction between public librarians and school personnel. This study may

disclose some of the necessities and obstacles to public and school library cooperation.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to school media specialists in Fulton and Gwinnett Public Schools and public librarians in the Atlanta-Fulton County and Gwinnett Library system, which is part of the Lake Lanier Regional Library System.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review focuses on some relevant past research studies done on cooperation between school and public librarians and what the results of these studies determined. Factors contributing to the success of such ventures are cited as well as obstacles to the success of cooperative activities.

Historical Background

The school library was an outgrowth of the public library. The public library was an agent of popular education early in its history. It brought books into the schools. Later, independent school libraries were established with a different societal role. However, it has always been recognized that some overlap existed between the two in philosophy, function, and public served (Amey, 1974). In 1961 the Council of Chief State School Officers adopted principles to clarify how the roles of the school and public

libraries differed and to indicate how the agencies interrelated to serve youth. It stated that "the school library serves the school and the public library serves the community. Teachers and pupils are members of both the school and community" (Aaron, 1980, p.8). It gave public library service the role of supplementing, but never supplanting the school library. The school library's role was guiding and instructing the children and youth in the community in the use of libraries. School and public libraries were assigned the responsibility of cooperative planning in the selection and utilization of materials for educational and recreational purposes (Aaron, 1980). The 1975 school library standards, Media Programs District and School, advocated formal cooperation with all types of libraries.

Amey (1974) thinks the public library should service the entire community, providing a collection of materials for all ages and be a free, voluntary agency. The school library's function is to service the school community and to provide curriculum-centered materials to students with access limited to members of the school community. At various times school and public libraries have attempted to merge with each other, primarily for tax savings. However, studies have opposed these mergings revealing that libraries suffer problems and

often failure because of fundamental differences in role definitions (Amey, 1974).

Aaron (1980) believes the reasons for interest in school/public library cooperation to be the following: increased demands for materials and services generated from the information explosions; fiscal constraints placed on libraries while the cost of materials and services increase; increased pressure to make better use of tax money; community education; federal legislation; and technological developments. In addition, the public library is assuming a larger responsibility for the education of community members.

School and Public Library Cooperation

Research has shown that to the present day little cooperation exists between public and school libraries (Shannon, 1991). Part of the problem may be that reduced funding in public libraries has eliminated the position of young adult librarians as a professional staff position. This is the librarian most likely to form a liaison with the school media specialist (Callison, Fink, & Hager, 1989; and Shannon, 1991).

Callison, et. al. surveyed 47 medium-sized libraries and 147 secondary schools in Indiana in 1986 on the status of

cooperation and communication. Their study confirmed a 1972 study by Blanche Woolls.

> [Woolls] found that there was a great lack of communication between the two institutions. No long-range planning for cooperative programs or cooperative collection building existed then; and such planning does not seem to exist today in the medium sized communities surveyed (Callison, et.al.,1989, p.80).

Callison, et.al. stated: "It appeared from this 1986 survey that few public librarians and secondary school librarians had given thought or action to pursuing cooperative collection development" (Callison, et.al., 1989, p. 82).

The survey revealed that "they didn't know each other or each other's collections" (Callison, et.al., 1989, p. 84). Three years later a 1989 national telephone survey by Callison and Hager, 1989, attempted to determine the amount of communication taking place between school and public librarians and what items would be of the most importance to each group in future planning. A sample of 147 public libraries was selected to represent medium-sized libraries in the nation. One hundred-forty-five public libraries were contacted. Results from the survey revealed the following:

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the public librarians reported that they had not met with a local secondary school librarian during the past year concerning cooperative activities. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the 12 public libraries with full-time young adult librarians reported no such contact. The most common topics given for discussion at such meetings from the forty-one percent (41%) who reported that contact had taken place over the previous year were "assignment alert", "automation", "resource-sharing", and "collection development" (Callison and Hager, 1989, p. 85). The respondents indicated a desire for more communication and increased cooperation with each other.

Shannon (1991) surveyed secondary school librarians and public librarians in one North Carolina county in 1990 to determine the status of cooperation between the two types of libraries. She developed a questionnaire consisting of both open-ended and closed-ended items which she distributed to thirty school librarians and seventeen public librarians in the county. The purpose of her study was "...to determine what cooperative activities characterize school library and public library programs in the county studied" (Shannon, 1991, p. 68). She used a simple model of cooperative activities to evaluate the level of cooperation. She also examined factors perceived as leading to the success of

cooperative activities and obstacles to cooperation. She sought a relationship between the size of the public library and the level of cooperation with schools. Her model included four levels of cooperation:

Level I - no cooperation

Level II - informal communication

Level III - informal cooperation

Level IV - formal cooperation

(Shannon, 1991, see Appendix A)

Most of the contact and cooperative activities fell under level II- informal communication. There was also some evidence of informal cooperation which fell under Level III. Communication was listed most frequently, as the main factor in successful cooperation. Lack of time and lack of communication were most frequently listed as the main obstacles. School librarians were more positive about the amount of contact with the other than were public librarians. There was no correlation between the size of the public library and the number of cooperative activities they reported.

Aaron (1989) and Dyer's (cited in Aaron, 1989) studies on cooperation found that attitude was a major obstacle. Role definition must be made clear to prevent mistrust,

misunderstanding, and jealousy from arising in cooperative situations (Aaron, 1980).

Billman and Owens (1989) study on collection development in Indiana libraries suggested these factors for successful cooperation/planning to take place:

> There must be a mutual attitude of trust and cooperation, a willingness to abandon turf and a library's stand-alone status. There must be a willingness to think more globally and long term about library services. There must be a willingness and ability to share the information and to lend materials through interlibrary loan. (Billman & Owens, 1985, p. 189).

Aaron's study of factors leading to success mentioned most frequently in the literature are: "planning; evaluation, differentiation of roles, technological, monetary, communications, leadership and other similar requirements, attitudes, and perceptions; and organizational concerns" (Aaron, 1980, p. 12).

Walser (1992) found in her study of public librarians' perceptions of school media specialists that the public librarians generally perceive school library media specialists as effective educators and skilled library professionals. These perceptions were most influenced by

cooperative planning activities between school library media specialists and teachers and school library media specialists' openness to cooperation with public librarians.

Other states and countries are publishing their successful cooperative ventures in the literature. The Vancouver Public Library and Vancouver School Board enacted a Partners in Education program in the fall of 1989. Its policy of Mutual Expectations outlines and defines the roles of the two systems in providing library services for school age young people. Its policy includes suggestions to assist teachers in helping their students make the best use of the public library (Douglas, 1990). Haycock (1989) suggests ways to develop cooperative activities related to processing and bibliographic access.

Other examples of close cooperation between school and public libraries include: class visits (Shannon, 1991); library tours (Shannon, 1991); term paper workshops (Good, 1990); homework alerts (Shannon, 1991); peer tutoring at the public library (Wallace, 1990); and developing joint community resources (Aaron, 1980).

Comparative collection development, computer networking, and shared goal setting are possible future developments (Billman and Owens, 1985/86, p. 164).

School and public librarians agree on the importance of cooperation. "Cooperation is becoming more of a necessity than a choice for the future", (Billman and Owens, 1985/86, p. 194). Fortunately librarians aren't "chained together, following rigid guidelines. We are free to achieve this goal in many different ways" (Morning, 1990, Preface). "For cooperation between separate independent community institutions to succeed, the staff and administration of each must accept the role of a member of a team working towards a common goal." (Cederoth & Chilton, 1990).

Summary

Although the roles of school and public libraries differ there has always been an overlap between the two in their functions and the publics they serve.

Cooperation between the two institutions has always been of interest, but research shows that to the present day, little cooperation exists. Factors contributing the most to the success of cooperation are good communication, planning, and attitude. The biggest obstacles to be overcome are lack of communication, time, and an unwilling attitude.

Good school and public library cooperation is becoming more important if the youth of our communities are to be

adequately serviced in an age of information explosion and budget cutbacks.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This was a descriptive study using a questionnaire survey methodology. The purpose of the study was to determine on which levels of cooperation most media specialists and public librarians function and whether or not the cooperation was satisfactory. The study also determined what obstacles prevented functioning at a higher level.

Population

The population surveyed in this study was chosen because the author of this paper works in the Fulton County School System and the Atlanta-Fulton County Library System services this community. The Gwinnett County School System was chosen because this system can access the Lake Lanier Regional Library's catalog by computer. The Lake Lanier System is the only system presently to have computerized access with public schools.

The public libraries surveyed in the Atlanta-Fulton County system included one central library, two regional and 26 branches. Eight branch libraries were surveyed in the Gwinnett System. Gwinnett is one of three counties under the Lake Lanier Regional Library System. Permission was received from the Branch Services Administrator of the Atlanta-Fulton County Library and the Public Service Administrator at the Lake Lanier Regional Library to distribute the surveys to the public library manager at each of the libraries.

A survey questionnaire was also sent to one school library media specialist at all elementary, middle, and secondary schools in Fulton and Gwinnett County Schools. This list was obtained from the Directory of Georgia Schools, 1992-93, published by the State Department. It included a total of 115 schools.

Instrumentation

A survey questionnaire (see Appendix B) was designed to determine the levels of cooperation of the school library media specialists and the public librarians. It also determined the degree of satisfaction school library media specialists and librarians had with the cooperation they experienced, and the obstacles they perceived as preventing functioning at a higher level.

The survey questionnaire used a combination of yes/no and multiple choice questions. It consisted of two parts.

A model of cooperative activities evaluated the level of cooperation. This model was developed by Shannon in her study (see Appendix A). The model was derived from models proposed by Billman and Owens (1985), Kester (1990), and Krubsack and Krubsack (1985). See references for complete citation on Billman and Owens.

Some of this writer's questions replicated those asked by Shannon (1991) in her study of cooperation in a North Carolina county. These questions distinguished the degree of communication among the four levels. Question 2 and 3 distinguished at least level II--informal communication. The frequency of meeting as asked in question 5 affected the level. If participants met on a regular basis e.g. weekly, monthly, or every three months, the designated level was III; if only sporadically, the designated level was II.

In question 4 cooperation in "Homework Alert" was also designated level II or III depending on frequency of contact. Under question 4 the following designations were given as identifiers of level II, III, or IV:

Level II -- Summer reading promotions

Level III -- Interlibrary loan; school visits by the public librarian; visits by school children to the public library; special joint programs; sharing of classroom collection; loan of A-V materials with the public library

Level IV -- Cooperative collection development; access to school catalog; sharing of central processing facilities

Questions 7, 8, and 9, and 10 were designated as level IV identifiers. Questions 1 and 6 related to the degree of satisfaction media specialists and public librarians had with the cooperation they experienced. Question 11 related to the obstacles perceived as preventing functioning at a higher level. Part II contained demographic questions which might influence the level of cooperation.

The survey questionnaire was critiqued by Georgia State classmates before it was field tested. It was field tested by four school library media specialists and four public librarians. Two media specialists worked on the elementary level, one on middle school level, and one on high school level. The public librarians worked in the Cobb public Library System. These media specialists and librarians were not included in the survey. They received the questionnaire

(see Appendix B) along with a cover letter (see Appendix C) explaining the purpose of the survey. They were asked to complete the questionnaire, noting the time it took, and to comment on any unclear terminology or questions. Their comments were used to modify the survey instrument.

Data Collection

A copy of the survey questionnaire and cover letter (see Appendix D) was mailed to each of the school media specialists in Gwinnett and Fulton Counties, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope for Gwinnett media specialists to return the survey. Fulton County media specialists received and returned their surveys through school mail. The administrators of the Atlanta-Fulton and Gwinnett Public Libraries distributed the surveys through their interlibrary mail. The Atlanta-Fulton administrator approved the survey on the condition it would be distributed and collected by her. On the surface it might appear that this procedure could bias the results, but on reviewing the results, there is no evidence of bias. The participants were asked to return the survey within two weeks.

Follow-up letters were sent out ten days after the initial mailing to those respondents who had not returned the survey. A code number was assigned to each survey for follow-

up, if necessary. This coding was to keep track of respondents and to account for non-respondents. The sample participants were not asked their names or locations. Survey results would be sent to those individuals who indicated their desire by writing their name and address on the last page of the survey.

Analysis of the Data

Descriptives statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to tabulate the data. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Cross comparisons, specifically chi-square analysis, were made between the school media specialists' and the public librarians' responses on the amount of satisfaction they experienced (question 1) and if meetings were held in the past year to discuss cooperation (question 3). Comparisons were also made according to the area or level on which the librarians worked, size of the school or public library collection. The comparisons were not deemed to be significant. The responses in Part I were used to determine the level of cooperation the respondent was operating on according to a model of levels of cooperation. Incomplete questionnaires were included in the tabulation, using the portions of the survey which were completed.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of communication and cooperation between school library media specialists and public librarians and whether or not the cooperation is satisfactory. The study also determined what obstacles prevent functioning at a higher level.

One hundred fifty-two surveys were mailed to 115 school library media specialists at each of the Fulton County and Gwinnett County schools and 37 public librarians at each of the Atlanta-Fulton County Public Libraries and the public libraries in Gwinnett County. The survey questionnaire was addressed to one media specialist at each school and the managers of the public libraries. Two separate questionnaires were sent out (see Appendix B).

A total of 83% of the survey questionnaires were completed and returned. These consisted of 90 (77%) from school library media specialists and 34 (92%) from public librarians. One survey was returned incomplete and a few

were returned that had one or more missing answers. These surveys were included in the tabulated results.

Research Question I

Survey questions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 through 10 in Part I related to Research Question I which deals with the level of communication and cooperation between school library media specialists and public librarians. In regard to whether or not contacts had been made by them or their counterpart for the purpose of working together in some way, 107 of the respondents (86.3%) said a contact had been made by one or the other.

Question 3 asked if meetings were held in the past year between the public librarians and school media specialists in their area to discuss cooperation. Public librarians were almost split in half on this question with 17 (51.5%) responding that meetings were held while only 47 (37.9%) of the school media specialists responded that they were held. Chi-square analysis of this question did not produce a statistically significant difference.

Table I reports the types of cooperative activities participated in by school media specialists/media centers with public librarians or libraries during the past year. The summer reading promotion(63.3%) was the most frequent

activity cited. The Homework Alert Program (45.6%) also rated high.

Table 1

Types of activities participated in by school library media specialists/media centers with public librarians.

Cooperative Activities	Frequency N = 90	Percent
Summer reading promotions	57	63.3
Homework Alert Program	41	45.6
Special joint programs (ex: visiting author or reading program)	19	21.1
Group visits by school children to the public library	13	14.4
Interlibrary loan	13	14.4
Loan of A/V materials with the public library	6	6.7
Sharing of classroom collections with public library	5	5.6
Cooperative collection development	2	2.2

Table 2 reports the types of cooperative activities participated in by public librarians/public libraries with school media specialists/media centers. Summer reading promotions, visits to the schools and group visits by school children to the public library were mentioned most frequently by the public librarians.

Table 2

Types of activities participated in by public librarians/public libraries with school media specialists/media centers.

Cooperative Activities	Frequency N = 33	Percent
Summer reading promotions	31	91.2
Visits to the schools	30	88.2
Group visits by school children to the public library	27	79.4
Homework Alert Program	13	39.4
Special joint programs (ex: visiting authors or reading programs)	6	17.6
Interlibrary loan	3	9.1
Cooperative collection development	2	5.9
Accessing school catalog	1	2.9

Some other cooperative activities mentioned that were not on the survey included the following:

- One media specialist video-taped a public library tour and showed it on closed circuit TV in her school.
- One media specialist received the public library's discarded Books in Print.
- Schools have use of Atlanta-Fulton County Ready Reference INFOLINE
- Three public librarians served on the media committee of the public school that they served.

School media specialists and public librarians were both asked the frequency of participation in cooperative activities with the other. Table 3 shows the frequency of cooperative activities as reported by school media specialists and public librarians. The most frequent occurrence for cooperative activities was once a year with 37 responding (41%), followed by twice a year with 31 or 34.4% responding.

Table 3

Cooperative activities

Occurrence	Specialist N=88		Librarians N=30	
	N	%	N	%
Weekly	0	0	1	3.0
Monthly	1	1.1	0	0
Every 3 months	8	8.9	8	24.2
Twice a school year	31	34.4	12	36.4
Once a school year	37	41.1	7	21.2
Never	11	12.2	2	6.1

Question 7 - 9 concerned the ability to have access to the public library's computerized catalog and share a list of union holdings and a union list of periodicals. The Gwinnett high schools could access the Lake Lanier Regional System's computerized catalog through a computer modem, but 19 (21%) stated that they had access, while 71 (78.9%) of the schools did not. Fulton County Schools have no access via computer

network to Atlanta-Fulton County Libraries. Ninety-five percent of the total sample do not share a union list of holdings and almost 93% do not share a union list of periodicals.

Question 10 concerned written policies regarding school library media center and public library cooperation. Eighty-two (66%) of the total sample reported there were no policies while 9 (7.3%) believed that there were and 32 (almost 26%) didn't know.

Research Question 2

Are the school library media specialists and public librarians satisfied with the level of communication and cooperation? School library media specialists reported they were much more satisfied--46 (51%) answered "yes" while 43 (47.8%) answered "no", than public librarians. Only eight (24%) of the public librarians responded that they were satisfied while 24 (72.2%) responded that they were not satisfied. A statistically significant correlation was shown between the level of satisfaction and amount of communication and whether the library is public or school: $\chi^2 = 6.78274$, $p. < .009$.

The majority of school library media specialists (57.8%) and public librarians (48.5%) responded that they had a positive attitude about their cooperative activities with each other while 22.2% of the school library media specialists and 39.4% of public librarians had mixed feelings. Only 2% of school library media specialists and 3% of public librarians had negative feelings. No experience, with their counterpart, was reported by 15.6% of the media specialists and 6% of public librarians.

Research Question 3

What obstacles do school library media specialists and public librarians see to interlibrary communication and cooperation?

School media specialists and public librarians agreed that lack of time was the major obstacle, followed by lack of staff and lack of communication. Their answers produced no significant differences. Twenty-one school media specialists (23%) and 3 public librarians (9%) specified other obstacles. Respondents' comments to this question are noted in Appendix E. Table 4 shows the major obstacles to interlibrary cooperation as seen by school media specialists and public librarians.

Table 4

Major obstacles blocking good interlibrary cooperation as seen by school media specialists and public librarians.

Obstacle	Specialist N=90		Librarian N=33	
	N	%	N	%
Lack of time	73	81.1	24	72.7
Lack of staff	52	57.8	17	51.5
Lack of communication	41	45.6	15	45.5
Lack of money	26	28.9	6	18.2
Other	21	23.3	3	9.1
Lack of interest	18	20.0	8	24.2
Lack of cooperation	8	8.9	7	21.2

Demographics

Forty-eight (53.3%) of the school library media respondents worked in an elementary school, 19 (21.1%) worked in a middle school, and 21 (23.3%) worked in high school.

The number of volumes in their book collection ranged from 4,000 to 25,000 with a mean of almost 12,000.

The majority (31) of public library respondents worked in a branch library (91.2%) while two worked in a regional library and one in a central library. The number of volumes in their book collection ranged from 9,000 to 100,000, with a mean number of 40,084. The size of the library was not a significant factor in the level of cooperation.

Public library positions in children's services (88.2%), management (52.9%), and reference services (52.9%) were most frequently represented. The respondents were asked to check all areas in which they worked. In many cases overlap occurred because a librarian worked in the majority of the areas represented on the survey, especially if the librarian had a management position in a small library (See Table 5).

Table 5

Public Library Services Represented

Service	Frequency N = 33	Percent
Children's Services	30	88.2
Management	18	52.9
Reference Services	18	52.9
Circulation Services	14	41.2
Young Adult Services	8	23.5
Technical Services	1	2.9

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of communication and cooperation between school library media specialists and public librarians and whether or not the cooperation is satisfactory. The study also determined what obstacles prevent functioning at a higher level.

Findings

The majority of school media specialists and public librarians participate in some cooperative activities with each other. The findings indicate that most public librarians and school media specialists operate on Level II, Informal Communication, based on the scale used by Shannon in her study. (see Appendix A) Libraries on this level still exist as independent institutions, but there is some exchange of information and sharing. Sporadic communication occurs for reference or assignment alert purposes. There is also indication that some are operating on Level III due to the nature and frequency of the activities. More public

librarians (9 out of 33) showed evidence of Level III than school media specialists (about 10 of 90).

Cooperation is occurring on a regular and more frequent basis. Class visits to the public library are arranged and public librarians make visits to the school library or classroom. Libraries are involved in joint activities and share resources. Some public librarians were assessed between Level II and III. They are conducting some Level III activities but not on a regular, frequent basis. Only a few school media specialists and one public librarian indicated that no contacts had been initiated between them and no cooperative activities were in progress, which is Level I according to Shannon's scale. None of the public libraries and public schools are operating on Level IV, Formal Cooperation. To obtain Level IV status all of Level III and written, formal policies exist as part of school district and public library policy. Neither Fulton nor Gwinnett County have written, formalized policies.

Table 6 shows the levels public librarians and school media specialists are operating on, according to Shannon's scale.

Table 6

Levels of school and public library cooperation

Shannon's Level	Specialist N=90		Public Librarian N=33	
	N	%	N	%
Level I	8	8.9	1	3.0
Level II	72	80.0	5	15.2
Between Level II & III	0	0	18	54.5
Level III	10	11.1	9	27.3
Level IV	0	0	0	0

The findings also revealed that school library media specialists were much more satisfied with the level of communication and cooperation between them than were the public librarians.

School media specialists and public librarians agreed that lack of time was the major obstacle to good interlibrary communication and cooperation, followed by lack of staff and lack of communication. Lack of interest was seen as an obstacle by one-quarter of the public librarians and one-fifth of the school media specialists.

Discussion

This study confirms the results of earlier studies that little cooperation exists between school media specialists and public librarians in most cases. Shannon's (1991) study also revealed that most of the interaction between school media specialists and public librarians was on an informal communication level. This study confirms her findings that school media specialists were more satisfied with the amount of cooperation than were public librarians. This study confirms studies by Shannon and Dyer (cited in Shannon, 1991) that lack of time is the major obstacle to good cooperation. This study found that lack of staff and lack of time were also deterrents to more formal cooperation.

Dyer found attitude to be a major factor in her study. Responses of lack of interest and cooperation in this study confirm attitude to be a factor also.

Aaron (1980) found that the attitudes and perceptions of school and public librarians are two of the most important elements influencing success. He believed roles of school media specialists and public librarians should be differentiated to jealousy from occurring in cooperative activities. One comment suggested that the school media specialists and public librarians do not know how to cooperate "inter-library". Perhaps school media specialists

have not considered reaching out into the community and to public librarians to be a priority. Some comments indicated this was because school media specialists were so strapped with other duties. Lack of interest was not a major obstacle.

This study revealed that some cooperative activities did not use the school media specialist as the liaison but were conducted between the public librarian and the teacher, principal, or lead teacher. This appears to be the case sometimes with the Homework/Assignment Alert Program or when classes visit the public library. Several times the respondent checked that cooperative activities were in progress, but the school media specialist was not participating in these activities.

The school media specialist appears to be unaware of some activities that may be occurring or the frequency of the occurrences. This is true when the teacher communicates with the public librarian without contacting the school media specialist.

Most of the respondents from Gwinnett County indicated they were participating in the Homework Alert Program. The administrator of Lake Lanier Regional Library confirmed that this policy was initiated by the Lake Lanier Regional Public Libraries. The school media specialists were used as contact

persons to funnel Homework Alert forms for teachers to fill out. The public librarians desire to be aware of needs for materials in advance, hence the popularity of these programs.

Atlanta-Fulton Public Library and the Fulton County Media Services cooperated on a joint program, a multi-cultural reading program and fair, in the fall of 1992. They hope to repeat the program next year. Some teachers and media specialists in Fulton County indicated they participated in the program.

Applications

The need for cooperation between school and public libraries rises as budget cutbacks in both institutions make resource sharing more necessary. With technological advances such as computer networks, there is a greater ability to share resources and input policies for interlibrary loan. Lack of computer networking was seen as a drawback by several respondents. Although Gwinnett high schools can access the Lake Lanier Regional Library catalog by computer modem, there is little evidence of interlibrary loan occurring at the present time. There is also no evidence that the public libraries can access the catalogs of the schools they serve.

Several years ago a committee of Atlanta-Fulton County public librarians and Fulton County school media specialists convened to address issues of concern to them. Although they have since disbanded, there is evidence on both sides of a need for better and more frequent cooperation and communication with each other. There is also interest in Gwinnett County in improving cooperation.

Meetings could discuss such issues as extended hours, joint programs, interlibrary loans, and study the implications of collection development and formal written policies concerning cooperation. They could determine the implications these programs would have on the community's service to its students.

Walser (1992) and Shannon (1991) determined that good cooperation needs communication and time for planning. There must also be a commitment on both sides to make it work. Cooperation is essential if we are to provide the best opportunities for the students of our communities in this Information Age.

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Appendix A

*Model for School Library and Public Library Cooperation**

Level I No Cooperation
Libraries exist as separate and independent institutions by choice or lack of precedent. No history of cooperation. Contacts have not been initiated by either school or public librarian.

Level II Informal Communication
Libraries still exist as separate and independent institutions, but contact has been established by either school or public librarian or both. Sporadic communication occurs for purposes such as reference or assignment alert. Libraries still relying almost totally on own resources to satisfy user needs. There is some exchange of information and sharing.

Level III Informal Cooperation
Cooperation is occurring on a regular and somewhat frequent basis. Class visits to the public library are arranged by the school librarian or public librarian or both. School and public librarians are regularly and routinely in contact relative to homework assignments. School librarian acts as liaison between teachers and students and the public library. Public librarians make visits to the school library and/or classrooms. School art, other projects are displayed in public library on a regular basis. Libraries sponsor joint activities. Resources are shared (such as classroom collections, ILL, school may loan a/v material to public library).

Level IV Formal Cooperation
All of Level III AND written and formalized policies and procedures exist as part of school district policy and public library policy. This may mean the existence of a multitype library network in which both school libraries and public libraries participate. Mutual sharing of materials of any kind. (Possibly cooperative collection development, sharing of central processing facilities, and/or union list of periodicals or complete holding).

**Derived from models proposed by Billman & Owens (1985), Kester(1990), and Krubsack & Krubsack (1985).*
Reproduced from Shannon (1991).

Appendix B

PUBLIC LIBRARIANS/SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS COOPERATION

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIANS

Part I. Put a check beside your response.

1. Are you satisfied with the amount of communication and cooperation you have with the school library media specialists in your service area or community?

   _____ Yes _____ No

2. Have contacts been made by you or the school library media specialist for the purpose of working together in some way?

   _____ Yes _____ No

3. Were meetings held in the past year between the public librarian/librarians and school library media specialists in your area to discuss cooperation?

   _____ Yes _____ No

4. Has your librarian or library participated in any of these cooperative activities with a school library media specialist or media center in the past year? (Check all that apply)

   _____Homework Alert Program (teachers notify the public library of student assignments)

   _____Interlibrary loan

   _____Visits to the schools

   _____Group visits by school children to the public library

   _____Special joint programs (ex.: visiting authors or reading programs)

   _____Summer reading promotions

_____Cooperative collection development

_____Accessing school catalog

_____Sharing central processing facilities

5. Approximately how often have you participated in cooperative activities with a school media specialist?

_____ Weekly _____ Every three months _____ Once a school year

_____ Monthly _____ Twice a school year _____ Never

6. How would you assess these cooperative activities in general?

_____ Positive _____ Negative _____ Mixed

_____ No experience

7. Is your library electronically networked with the public school area you serve?

_____ Yes _____ No

8. Does your library share a union list of holdings with the public school area you serve?

_____ Yes _____ No

9. Does your library share a union list of periodicals with public school area you serve?

_____ Yes _____ No

10. Does your library have written policies concerning school library media center and public library cooperation?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't know

11. What do you feel are the major obstacles blocking good interlibrary cooperation? (Check all that apply.)

_____ Lack of time
_____ Lack of cooperation
_____ Lack of communication
_____ Lack of interest
_____ Lack of staff
_____ Lack of money
_____ Other: Please specify _____

PART II. Please check your response.

1. Are you working in a

_____ Regional library
_____ Central library
_____ Branch library

2. What is the number of volumes in your book collection?

_____

3. In what capacity of the library do you work? Check all that apply.

_____ Management
_____ Reference Services
_____ Young Adult Services
_____ Circulation Services
_____ Children's Services
_____ Technical Services

SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS/PUBLIC LIBRARIANS COOPERATION

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS

Part I. Put a check beside your response.

1. Are you satisfied with the amount of communication and cooperation you have with the public librarians?

   _____ Yes _____ No

2. Have contacts been made by you or the public librarian for the purpose of working together in some way?

   _____ Yes _____ No

3. Were meetings held in the past year between the public librarian/librarians and school media specialists in your area to discuss cooperation?

   _____ Yes _____ No

4. Has your library participated in any of these cooperative activities with a public library in the past year?

   _____Homework Alert Program (teachers notify the public library of student assignments)

   _____Interlibrary loan

   _____Sharing of classroom collections with public library

   _____Loan of A/V material with the public library

   _____Group visits by school children to the public library

   _____Special joint programs (ex.: visiting authors or reading programs)

   _____Summer reading promotions

   _____Cooperative collection development

   Sharing central processing facilities

5. Approximately how often have you participated in cooperative activities with a public librarian?

_____ Weekly _____ Every three months _____ Once a school year
_____ Monthly _____ Twice a school year _____ Never

6. How would you assess these cooperative activities in general?

_____ Positive _____ Negative _____ Mixed

_____ No experience

7. Is your library electronically networked with the public library in your area?

_____ Yes _____ No

8. Does your library share a union list of holdings with the public library in your area?

_____ Yes _____ No

9. Does your library share a union list of periodicals with public library in your area?

_____ Yes _____ No

10. Does your library have written policies concerning school library media center and public library cooperation?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't know

11. What do you feel are the major obstacles blocking good interlibrary cooperation? Check all that apply.

_____ Lack of time
_____ Lack of cooperation
_____ Lack of communication
_____ Lack of interest
_____ Lack of staff
_____ Lack of money
_____ Other: Please specify _____

PART II. Please check your response.

1. On which level do your work?

_____ Elementary school
_____ Middle school
_____ High school

2. What is the number of volumes in your book collection?

_____

Appendix C

501 Salem Woods Drive
Marietta, Georgia 30067
December 4, 1993

Dear Public Librarian,

For my Specialists research study at Georgia State University I am collecting data that I hope will be useful to school library media specialists and public librarians in forming good liaisons with each other. This questionnaire is designed to determine the level of cooperation between school library media specialists and public librarians and whether or not the cooperation is satisfactory to them. The study may also disclose some of the obstacles to public and school library cooperation.

Your library was not part of the testing sample. Before I distribute the survey however, I am requesting your help in field testing this survey.

I am interested in:
- time required to complete the survey;
- unclear terminology; and
- unclear questions.

Please respond to the survey, noting the time required to complete it on the last page. Please write any comments you may have in the margins; general comments may be written on the last page.

Please make any recommendations you feel would improve this survey. I appreciate your help with this study.

Thank you,

Susan Tregone

501 Salem Woods Drive
Marietta, Georgia 30067
December 4, 1993

Dear School Media Specialist,

For my Specialists research study at Georgia State University I am collecting data that I hope will be useful to school library media specialists and public librarians in forming good liaisons with each other. This questionnaire is designed to determine the level of cooperation between school library media specialists and public librarians and whether or not the cooperation is satisfactory to them. The study may also disclose some of the obstacles to public and school library cooperation.

Your media center was not part of the testing sample. Before I distribute the survey however, I am requesting your help in field testing this survey.

I am interested in:
- time required to complete the survey;
- unclear terminology; and
- unclear questions.

Please respond to the survey, noting the time required to complete it on the last page. Please write any comments you may have in the margins; general comments may be written on the last page.

Please make any recommendations you feel would improve this survey. I appreciate your help with this study. Please return this survey within five days in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you,

Susan Tregone

Appendix D

501 Salem Wood Drive
Marietta, Georgia 30067
January 4, 1993

Dear Respondent:

In the present Information Age cooperation between school libraries and public libraries is essential in providing students with access to information. This questionnaire is designed to determine the level of cooperation between school library media specialists and public librarians and whether or not the cooperation is satisfactory to them. The study may also disclose some of the obstacles to public and school library cooperation.

I am collecting data for my Specialists research study at Georgia State University that I hope will be useful to school library media specialists and public librarians in forming good liaisons with each other. This questionnaire is being sent to school library media specialists in Fulton and Gwinnett Counties and public librarians in the Atlanta-Fulton County and Gwinnett County Library Systems. Your participation in this study is critical to its success and is most appreciated.

All responses will be confidential and used only for statistical analysis. No individuals or libraries will be identified in reporting the data.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed return envelope by January 18. Thank you for your time and contribution to this study. If you would like a summary of the results, please print your name and address on the last page.

Sincerely,

School Media Specialist

Appendix E

Comments from school media specialists to Question #11:

- There is less need in elementary school.
- We have great cooperation. One of the public librarians is a volunteer mom in my media center.
- No definite yes or no when I have communicated with public librarians with a list of periodicals or approached them about a library card sign-up.
- Too many changes in policy.
- I served on the county committee of school and public librarians - about the time we had a good relationship their personnel changed and the new person had to start over. After several years of meeting and trying we gave up.
- Public librarians never contact me directly. When they came to my school to present the Alert Program, I found out about it when I arrived at the faculty meeting. I had worked with them previously so they knew I existed.
- Our students are very aware of the public library facilities and use them when we're not open.
- Lack of materials for this age level.
- Public library hours are not long enough for high school students to use the public library.
- Inappropriateness--the public library sends monthly announcements (one for each teacher) of programs that are usually too juvenile for middle schoolers, too inaccessible or inconvenient because of the school schedule or bus programming or are not programmed for large numbers of middle schoolers.
- Several public librarians are good about returning my school's library books when returned accidently to their library.
- Lack of knowledge on how to cooperate "interlibrary".
- Different roles make our main goals and program emphasis take different directions to which we each allot our energy and resources. We cooperate when feasible. Limited resources of staff and materials limit feasibility.

- A service I really appreciate is that I often call the reference desk at Lilburn Public Library to find answers to reference questions children bring in. Sometimes we just don't have the source we need to find the answer, and they always find it for us and call us back. This communicates to the child that the public library is an alternative to our collection when they need more than our resources can offer.

- Lack of need

- Lack of electronic network capability.

- We need good communication between librarians. sometimes we don't hear from teachers of their projects so it is hard to communicate to public library.

- We have a public librarian serving as a member of our school media committee. The purpose in doing this was to increase communication between our media center and the branch library.

- There is lots of interest on both parts.

- Both our public libraries and our school libraries are so busy serving so many patrons that we don't have time or resources to share. We have 60 schools in Gwinnett County so we do much more sharing among schools than with the public library.

- No way yet to network.

Comments by Public Librarians to Question #11:

- I have perceived a lack of interest on the part of school media specialists to meet with me.

- In some instances the librarian may be over extended in duties at school.

- Perhaps a lack of initiative--there are plenty of other demands placed on us at both ends. It's easy to put this lower on the list of priorities.

- Good cooperation requires advance planning to coordinate activities and assignments (time consuming). Some people don't plan far enough ahead.